

U.S. Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Region 1, Portland, Oregon

Selection of Alternative

and

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

for the

**Environmental Assessment for the
Interim Visitor Services Plan at
Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge,
the Battle of Midway National Memorial,
and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument's
Midway Atoll Special Management Area**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has prepared an environmental assessment to evaluate a proposed visitor services program at the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (Midway Atoll) that will be managed by FWS and its monument co-trustees. Copies of the draft environmental assessment were sent to interested parties (see list in section 6 of the assessment).

Because the final environmental assessment is not substantially different from the draft and the majority of public input was highly supportive of the proposed action, only an announcement of the decision is being made through local news media, and copies of this Finding of No Significant Impact are being distributed to those on the mailing list.

The environmental assessment evaluated two alternatives: No Action and the Proposed Action. The proposed action (Alternative 2) has been selected for implementation and will provide for the establishment of a compatible visitor services program.

Alternative 2 was selected based upon the following factors:

- Through implementation of the proposed action, FWS can continue to meet its responsibilities for national trust resources by providing an effective level of natural resources management that will benefit endangered and threatened species, migratory birds, and other native fish, wildlife, and plant resources at Midway Atoll.
- Alternative 2 provides opportunities for the public to see, learn about, and enjoy the unique natural and historic resources on Midway Atoll.

Alternative 1, the no-action alternative, provides for the same level of refuge management, but provides only limited wildlife-dependent recreational activities for the occasional visitor.

Alternative 1 was not selected because it would not allow regular visitor access to the refuge to learn about and appreciate the atoll ecosystem and enjoy a wider variety of wildlife-dependent recreational activities in accordance with mandates for the FWS to facilitate compatible wildlife-dependent recreation on national wildlife refuges found in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 amendment to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966.

As described in detail in the environmental assessment and supporting documents, implementing the selected alternative will have no significant impacts on any of the environmental resources identified in the environmental assessment. The following summarizes the basis for the finding of no significant impact:


- The proposed action represents a modest increase in the level of human activity and allows refuge management to remain the same or increase slightly through volunteer activities by visitors.
- Because Midway Atoll is located far from any municipality, effects on society are minimal. There are no significant economic effects of the proposed action and no residents would be displaced.
- Midway Atoll has significant natural and historical resource values including endangered and threatened species, critical habitat, migratory birds, and nationally significant historic properties. The proposed action has been evaluated with respect to the continued conservation, protection, and management of these resources. Measures to avoid or reduce potential adverse effects have been incorporated into the proposal and include provisions for carefully controlled visitor use (including restrictions on activities, limits to use levels, and restrictions on areas). The proposed action calls for a high degree of education and training for residents and visitors. Monitoring programs will be implemented to detect and reduce adverse effects to less than significant levels and to help ensure programs are compatible with refuge purposes. FWS bears the responsibility of ensuring compatibility with refuge purposes and retains the ability to modify or further restrict use levels, practices, or institute new limitations to protect wildlife and historic resources. The visitor activities outlined in the interim visitor services plan will foster an increased understanding of and appreciation for the natural, cultural, and historic resources of Midway Atoll and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, leading to better protection for these resources. By participating in compatible wildlife-dependent recreation, visitors will better appreciate the value of and need for fish and wildlife conservation throughout remote island ecosystems.
- There would be no significant effects of the action on human health and safety.
- The environmental assessment considered long-term and cumulative effects. No significant long-term or cumulative effects were found to result from implementing the proposed action.

The planning process incorporated a variety of public involvement techniques in developing and reviewing the interim visitor services plan. The details of FWS' public involvement program are described in the environmental assessment.

Based upon my review and evaluation of the information contained in the environmental assessment, I have determined that the proposed interim visitor services plan at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, Battle of Midway National Memorial, and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument's Midway Atoll Special Management Area is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of section 102(2) (c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Accordingly, the preparation of an environmental impact statement on the proposed action is not required.

The final environmental assessment is on file at: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hawaiian and Pacific Islands National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 5-231, Box 50167, Honolulu, Hawaii 96850. Phone: (808) 792-9541. Copies of the final environmental assessment are available upon request.

Approved:



Carolyn Bohan, Regional Chief
National Wildlife Refuge System
Pacific Region

Date: 5/23/07

Submitted by:



Barry Christenson, Refuge Manager
Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and
Battle of Midway National Memorial

5/21/07

Date

Concur:



Barry W. Stieglitz, Project Leader
Hawaiian and Pacific Island
National Wildlife Refuge Complex

5/21/07

Date

Supporting References

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2007. Interim visitor services plan for Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and the Battle of Midway National Memorial. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Report. May 2007. Honolulu, HI.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2007. Environmental assessment for the interim visitor services plan for Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and the Battle of Midway National Memorial. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Report. May 2007. Honolulu, HI.